

Message Text

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64

ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12

OMB-01 RSR-01 /084 W

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R 091743 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6429

INFO USCINCSO CZ

AMCONSUL CALI

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINT, CO

SUBJECT: CONSERVATIVE PARTY POLITICS

REF: BOGOTA' S 1792 AND 1090

1. A GROUP OF FIFTY- ONE CONSERVATIVE PARLIAMENTARIANS OUT OF A TOTAL IN THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF 94 SENT A LETTER TO RAFAEL AZUERO MANCHOLA, THE PRES OF THE NATIONAL CONSERVATIVE, DIRECTORATE, ON MAR 7 ASKING THAT THE DIRECTORATE BE EXPANDED BY ADDING MEMBERS FROM FORMERLY DISSIDENT GROUPS.
2. IN A DIRECT ATTACK ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRATIONS OF ALVARO GOMEZ HURTADO THE LETTER SAID THAT THE BEST SOLUTION FOR 1974-1978 WOULD BE A NATIONAL CANDIDATE WHOSE ELECTION WOULD NOT REPRESENT THE VICTORY OF ONE PARTY OVER ANOTHER. (THE DRAFTERS OF THE LETTER SAY THEY ARE TALKING HERE ABOUT EITHER AN INFORMAL EXTENSION OF THE NATIONAL FRONT OR A CANDIDATE WHOM ELEMENTS IN BOTH PARTIES CAN SUPPORT. IN BOTH CASES THE IMPLICATION IS THAT THE PROGRESSIVES WILL SUPPORT A LIBERAL.)
3. THE LIBERAL PRESS IMMEDIATELY HEADLINED THE LETTER AS A SIGN THAT THE CONSERVATIVES ARE BADLY SPLIT. HOWEVER, ONE- THIRD OF THE

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INDIVIDUALS ON THE LIST ARE CONGRESSMEN WHO WERE ELECTED ON BELISARIO BETANCUR'S LISTS IN THE 1970 ELECTIONS; IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER THESE CONGRESSMEN REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT FORCE WITHIN THE PARTY AT PRESENT. ANOTHER GROUP REPRESENTS THE PROGRESSIV

E CONSERVATIVES WHO BROKE AWAY FROM THE MAIN PARTY IN MAY, 1971 BECAUSE THEY WERE OPPOSED TO GOMEZ. THEY WERE DEFEATED OVERWHELMINGL

Y DURING THE 1972 ELECTION; FOR EXAMPLE, J. EMILIO VALDERRAMA, ONE OF THEIR MOST IMPORTANT LEADERS, WAS DEFEATED BY MORE THAN 2 TO 1. IN HIS HOME DEPARTMENT OF ANTIOQUIA. THE OTHER GROUP THAT MAKES UP THE LIST OF NAMES INCLUDES THOSE WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES NEUTRAL, AN ALL INCLUSIVE TERM, COVERING MANY DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS.

4. THE KEY TO A SETTLEMENT OF THE CURRENT FIGHT WILL BE WHETHER THE GOMEZ FORCES AGREE TO SEAT BETANCURISTAS ON THE NATIONAL DIRECTORATE.

AT PRESENT TWO OR THREE MEMBERS ARE CONSIDERED FRIENDS OF THE PROGRES SIVES.

THE BETANCURISTAS HAVE NO REPRESENTATION AND WANT TWO SEATS. THE SIZE OF THE DIRECTORATE IS A MATTER OF ARGUMENT, BUT THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT IT CONSISTS OF 10 OR 11 MEMBERS. SACCIO

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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